

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FRIDAY ASARA B'TEVES

This year Asara b'Teves is on Friday. The last time it happened was 7 years ago. Asara b'Teves marks the beginning of Nebuchadnetzar's 3-year siege of Yerusholayim which culminated in the destruction of the first Beis Hamikdosh which had been standing for 410 glorious years.

Yeshaya Hanovi tells us that this tragedy happened because Klal Yisroel forsook the Torah and also due to a lack of Tznius in dress and behaviour. This siege was considered "beginning of the end" and so we fast on Asara b'Teves even if it falls on Friday.

Our custom is that the fast comes in at 4:44am which is 72 minutes before sunrise. If you intend to eat in the morning beforehand you should have it in mind before you go to sleep the night before.

People who are ill, pregnant or nursing should not fast. People who need water to take pills should use a minimal amount. If a person eats or drinks by mistake, they should still continue the rest of the fast.

Even though normally on a fast one shouldn't wash their whole body in hot water derech taanug, when it is on Friday one can prepare for Shabbos in the normal way. Similarly, one can cut hair and nails. Someone who feels discomfort can brush their teeth and wash their mouth out as normal, being careful not to swallow. One should not taste the Shabbos food erev Shabbos if it can only be done by swallowing.

We say Aneinu at mincha. If forgotten one doesn't repeat the Shmone Esrei. Mincha is davened in our Shabbos clothes. There is leining and haftora, nefilas apayim or Ovinu Malkeinu. There is normally a minhag to give Tzedaka at mincha on a Taanis but this should be done at Shacharis instead so that aniyim can use the money to buy food for Shabbos.

The taanis ends at 9:25pm and even if one brings in Shabbos early one can't eat before that time. Upon arriving home from Shul it is acceptable to make Kiddush and hamotze immediately and only after that to say Sholom Aleichem, Eishes Chayil and any accompanying tefillos one normally says.

May we still be zoiche to the Geula sheleima imminently and instead of fasting be able to celebrate together b'sosson uv'simcha.

